

February 21, 2013

To: Executive Committee

From: Chair, Disability Issues Committee

Subject: Affordable Housing for Persons with Disabilities - Update from the Housing, Outreach and Transportation Working Groups of the Disability Issues Committee (Item DI5.5)

Committee Decision

The Disability Issues Committee recommends to the Executive Committee that:

1. The following Recommendation 1 in the report (January 28, 2013) from the Disability Issues Committee Housing Working Group, be forwarded to the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, for inclusion in the public consultation on accessibility requirements of the Ontario Building Code:
 - “1. Accessible Housing: Recommendation: Require all new/ retrofitted condos and apartments to have accessible units as part of a building permit and licensing requirements.- Wheelchair signage, braille signage audio smoke/ fire alarms per building code (updates anticipated) per Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). They could be asked to have 100 percent units with accessible wide doors, large washrooms, grab bars and 10 percent with lower counters and option for wheel-in shower. Parking and amenities to be 100 percent.”
2. The following Recommendations 1 and 3 in the report (January 28, 2013) from the Disability Issues Committee Housing Working Group, be forwarded to the Planning and Growth Committee for consideration in the review of the City's Official Plan:

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- “1. Accessible Housing: Recommendation: Require all new/ retrofitted condos and apartments to have accessible units as part of a building permit and licensing requirements.- Wheelchair signage, braille signage audio smoke/ fire alarms per building code (updates anticipated) per AODA. They could be asked to have 100 percent units with accessible wide doors, large washrooms, grab bars and 10 percent with lower counters and option for wheel-in shower. Parking and amenities to be 100 percent.
3. Toronto’s Group Home Bylaws: Recommendation: That Toronto’s Group home bylaws be fully reviewed so that the current bylaws which restrict where people who use group homes can live (a form of discrimination) be removed.”
3. The following Recommendations 2 and 4 in the report (January 28, 2013) from the Disability Issues Committee Housing Working Group, be forwarded to the Affordable Housing Committee for consideration and review:
 - “2. Accessible/Affordable Housing and Shelter: Recommendation: Offer incentives to home owners to provide an apartment to a student or someone with a disability (home sharing program). Especially, people with a diagnosis of mental health issues, homeless youth, vision, hard of hearing people with a developmental disability, autism etc., that is safe, clean, and affordable. Subsidy could be offered to tenet to offset rental/ heat/ hydro costs.
 4. Youth-in-Transition (with disabilities): That the City of Toronto fully reviews the means by which to increase housing to youth-in-transition that have housing issues that are disability-specific and specific to transitional-aged youth.

Recommendation: That a task force be arranged to review this issue and it’s complexities if needed.”
4. The following Recommendations 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 in the report (January 28, 2013) from the Disability Issues Committee Housing Working Group, be forwarded to the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, requesting a response by way of a presentation to the Disability Issues Committee, including policies and procedures related to rent geared to income units:

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- “5. Creating accessible communications within the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) -This includes equitable access to the information and application process. This includes transparency of complaints processes that are pertinent to human rights, equity and fairness.

Recommendations: All persons inquiring about housing at the TCHC gain access to applications for housing and when required that application is made accessible. An accessible format may include access to a Braille copy, or a copy by e-mail for accessible screen reader use. Access in different languages should also be considered when required.

6. Insuring that staff of the TCHC has the correct information about TCHC’s policies on accessibility and Inclusion including knowledge of the Human Rights Code and the AODA

Recommendations: That agency-wide training and education on the policies and procedures of the TCHC pertaining to disability be under-taken and re-emphasized for all current staffs in the organization.

-That policies and procedures related to accessibility and housing be taught to all staff

-The messaging about Disability and housing has to reflect the TCHC’s desire to include all marginalized groups into its housing services and that the TCHC’s goal is to provide access to all of those that qualify.

7. Insuring Equal and Fair Access to Parking in TCHC units. Sometimes a parking space in a TCHC unit is required for when the tenants stated (ease of access) and for attendant care services.

Recommendations: A full review of current parking policies at the TCHC is needed with an accessibility/disability lens in mind that is inclusive persons with disabilities that are TCHC tenants.

8. Information on modifying a currently modified unit to make it accessible

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Recommendations: That the TCHC develop, implement and disseminate an accessible policy with consultation from the disability community that communicates clearly and simply about individualized accessibility within TCHC units. This can include but is not limited to ceiling tracts, grab bars, accessible toileting, voice systems for doors, braille in kitchen areas etc.

-That these policies and procedures be communicated to all staffs of the TCHC.

9. That the TCHC develop an awareness of how their current policies and procedures impact other systems and supports for persons with disabilities. In some areas of communication in the TCHC there is a lack of various policies and programs that directly impact TCHC tenants with disabilities such as Community Start Up, the Assistive Devices Program and Direct Funding to name a few.

Recommendations: Agency-wide education about accessibility and housing that is inclusive of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA Act. The training should include information about social services access as it pertains to disability."

5. The Executive Director, Human Resources, be invited to make a presentation to the Disability Issues Committee on how Human Resources will respond to the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, as it pertains to the City's recruitment and employment strategies.

Background

The Disability Issues Committee on February 14, 2013, considered updates from the following members of the Disability Issues Committee Working Groups:

- Terri-Lynn Langdon, Housing Working Group;
- Valentina Gal, Outreach Working Group; and
- Tracy Odell, Transportation Working Group.

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Background Information

(January 28, 2013) Updated Report from the Housing Subcommittee of the Disability Issues Committee

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/di/bgrd/backgroundfile-55821.pdf>)

Sincerely,



Councillor Adam Vaughan
Chair, Disability Issues Committee

